

THE COMING OF URBAN THE FIFTH

had sent Messer Vanni Malavolti, the government a certain Jacomo di Guido Guernieri (a swordsmith by trade), as ambassadors to Florence, and at length, in the spring of 1369, by Florentine intervention, a temporary peace was made between the nobles and the people, which was greeted with trumpets and salvos and great rejoicing.

Like most others that belonged to the order of the Dodicini, the family of Jacomo di Benincasa suffered heavily from the change of government. Catherine's elder brothers, Benincasa and Bartolommeo, were active members of their faction, and, either on the occasion of the September rising or in one of the later tumults, they were sought out by a band of the populace who meant to take their lives. A friend rushed into the house, telling them that the enemy were at hand, urging them to take refuge in the neighbouring church of Sant' Antonio, whither others of their faction had already fled. But Catherine sprang to her feet: " They must not go to Sant' Antonio," she said, " and I am sorry indeed for those who are there." She put on her mantle, and, bidding her brothers come with her and fear not, led them safely through their enemies, who lowered their weapons and reverently saluted her as she passed, to the hospital of Our Lady, where she left them in charge of the rector, telling them to stay in hiding for three days, and then return home in safety. And so it happened. All those who had taken shelter in Sant' Antonio were slain or made prisoners, but, after three days, the tumult subsided. Catherine's brothers were condemned to a fine of one hundred gold florins, which they paid, and were left in peace.¹

As we have seen, the Twelve had still a small part in the new regime, and Benincasa and Bartolommeo were at first among the representatives of their faction that held office, the latter, it is said, having even sat in the Signoria as one of the Defenders for two months in 1370. But their condition had altered for the worse since their father's death. The revolution had ruined their business prospects, and, in the early autumn of this year, the two,

¹ The anonymous author of the *Miracolt*, quoted by Grottanelli in the notes to the *Leggenda minors*, pp. 209, 210.